THE

BISHOP of *CHICHESTER*'s

SERMON

Before the

KING,

JANUARY 30. 1696.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

KING

At WHITEHALL,

ON

JANUARY 30. 1696.

BY

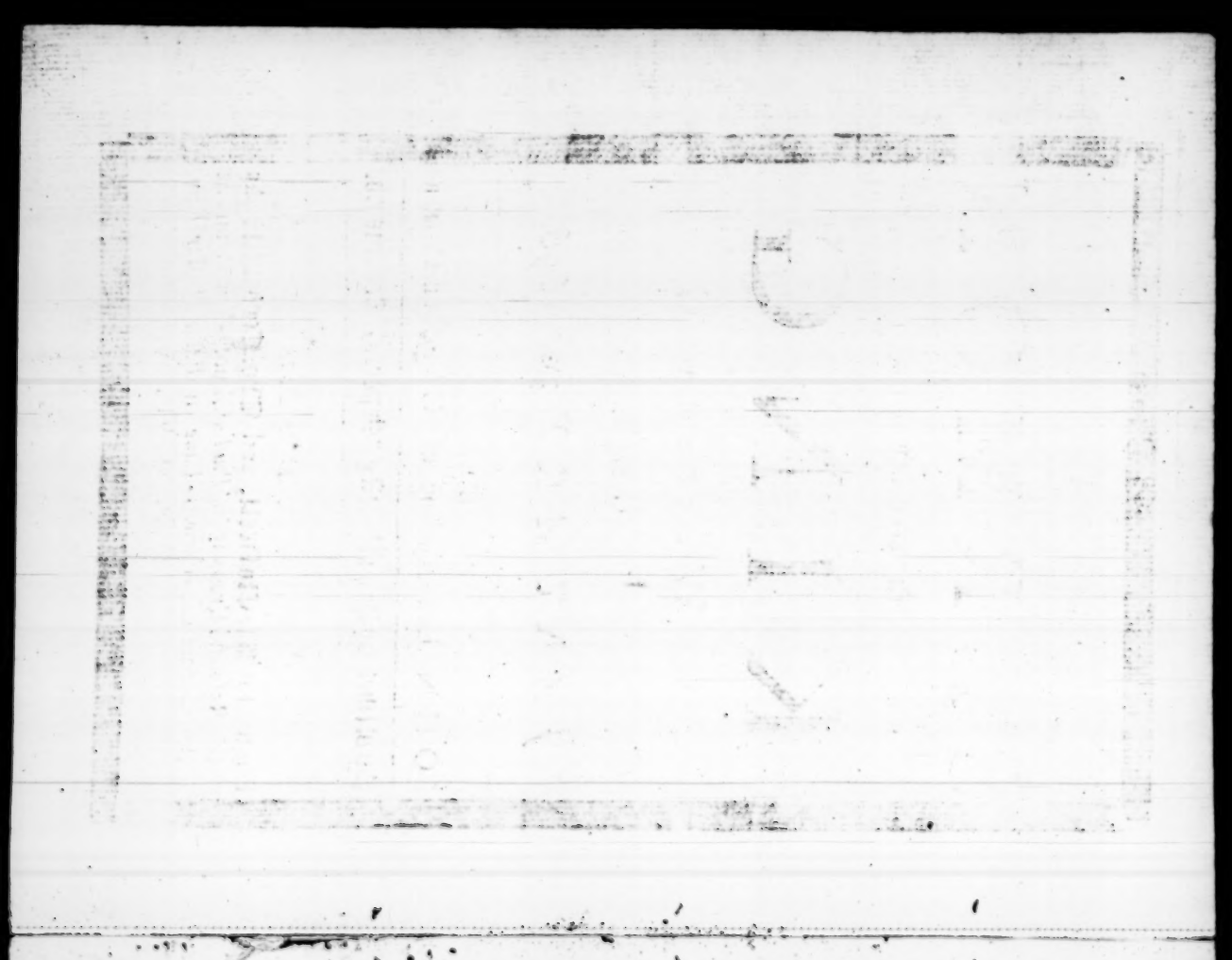
JOHN Lord Bishop of CHICHESTER.

Published by His Majesty's Special Command.

LONDON:

Printed for **Ri. Chiswell**, and **Tho. Cockerill**: At the *Rose* and *Crown* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard; and at the Corner of *Warwick-Lane* in *Pater-Noster-Row*.

M DC XC VII.



MATTH. XXIII. 34,35,36.

Behold I ſend unto you prophets, and wiſe men, and ſcribes; and ſome of them ye ſhall kill and crucify, and ſome of them ſhall ye ſcourge in your ſynagogues, and perſecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, Son of Barachias, whom ye ſlew between the Temple and the Altar. Verily I ſay unto you; All theſe things ſhall come upon this generation.

IN this Chapter our Bleſſed Saviour pronounces no leſs than Eight dreadful Woes againſt the Scribes and Phariſees for their groſs Hypocriſy; and amongſt the reſt, for the pretended Reverence they bore to the Memory of the Ancient Prophets, whom their fore-fathers wickedly Abuſed, Perſecuted, and Killed; ſo that they ſaid, *If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets*, v. 30.

But our Saviour ſhews, that if they had lived in thoſe Days, they would have acted in the

ſame way; ſince the ſame temper was exiſtent in them, as had been heretofore in their Fathers. So *v.* 31. *Ye are witneſſes unto your ſelves, that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets. Fill ye up then the meaſure of your Fathers*, for that ye are now in the way to: *Wherefore, behold I ſend unto you prophets*, &c. and ye will do unto them as your Fathers heretofore did unto thoſe Prophets, whoſe Sepulchres ye now Garniſh, and whoſe Praiſes ye Celebrate. So that in the Event, upon you will come the ſoreſt Judgments; and it will be, as if all *the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias*, &c. were required of this Generation.

There is ſome doubt to be made concerning the *Zachariah* referred to in the Text; for there were ſeveral of that Name in Scripture, as alſo in *Joſephus* the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian. But this we may obſerve, that whoever he was, he was Slain before the time that our Saviour here ſo ſharply inveighs againſt the *Jews*; for it is by him charged upon them as a thing paſt, *whom ye ſlew*. Again, it was a ſtory well known to that People, and a caſe very notorious; and if ſo, as there was no caſe more notorious than that of *Zachariah* the Son of *Jehoiada*; ſo there was none

2 Chron. 24. 20.

none that this Character could agree to, but to him, who was ſlain *in the court of the houſe of the Lord*; or as it is here, *between the Temple and the Altar.*

But then there are Two or Three difficulties remaining, one of which is, That *Zachariah*, who is here called the Son of *Barachias*, is in the Regal Story ſaid to be the Son of *Jehoiada.*

In anſwer to which, We may obſerve from Scripture, That it was common among the *Jews* (as among many other Nations) to give ſeveral Names to the ſame Perſon; as *Solomon* was called *Lemuel* and *Jedidiah*; and eſpecially where thoſe Names were of the ſame ſignification, as *Jehojakim* and *Eliakim.* And thus it is with *Jehoiadah* and *Barachiah.* 2 Sam. 12. 21. Prov. 31. 1. 2 Kings 23. 34. 2 Chron. 36. 4. *Vid.* Joſeph. Ant. l. 2. c. 12.

2. It was uſual to give, or to have Names given, upon ſome Eminent Service done by them, or ſome Eminent Bleſſing that befel them. So *Gideon* had the Name of *Jerubbaal* given to him by his Father *Joaſh*, upon his breaking down the Altar of *Baal*: And *Jacob* was called *Iſrael*, becauſe *as a prince he had power with God and men.* Thus *Zacharias* is here called the Son of *Barachias*, or (as that Name ſignifies) the *bleſſed of the Lord*, which was among them a term of Honour and Reſpect. Jud. 6. 32. Gen. 32. 28. Gen. 24. 31. 26. 29.

And

And a Name without doubt, as it was due, ſo was given to *Jehoiada* in a more eſpecial manner, becauſe of his eminent Piety, and of his Zeal in advancing *Joaſh* to the Throne; and for reſtoring the Liberties and Religion of that People, after they had both been invaded by the Infamous Practices of the Idolatrous *Athaliah*. He may for this reaſon well deſerve the Name of *Barachias*, or *the bleſſed of the Lord*.

2 Chron. 23.

And then the Aggravation of the Sin was, That this *Zachariah* martyr'd by them, was the Son of that brave *Jehoiada*, that Patriot of their Countrey; and whom, without any regard to his Anceſtor, to his own Quality, his Meſſage, or the Place, they furiouſly ruſhed upon, and ſtoned him (the Puniſhment of Blaſphemers) in the Court of the Lord's Houſe, or Court of the Prieſts.

Levit. 24. 16.

A Fact ſo heinous, that the *Jews* ſay, his Blood continully bubbled up, and was not expiated till the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, which was about Two hundred and fifty years after.

V. *Lightfoot.* Vol. 2. Talmud. Exercitat.

But if it was at this diſtance from the time of our Saviour, how comes this Inſtance of *Zacharias* to be the laſt, as that of *Abel* was the firſt?

I anſwer, Becauſe that Blood was ſuppoſed to lye upon that Nation till the Captivity; after which

which they were as averſe to Idolatry, as ever they were before addicted to it; and therefore that ſort of Perſecution ended with it.

But if it were ſo that *Zacharias* was the Son of that *Jehoiadah*, it ſeems very hard and unjuſt that this Blood, and much more the Blood of *Abel*, and all the Righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth, ſhould be required of that Generation, as our Saviour here affirms.

For what was the blood of *Abel* to them, who was Killed by his Brother *Cain*, all of whoſe Poſterity periſhed in the Deluge? Or how were they concerned in the Blood of ſuch Righteous Perſons, as were ſlain in other parts of the Earth, or even in that of *Zacharias*, who, though killed by their Anceſtors, was ſlain above Seven hundred years before?

I grant, this Blood could no more literally be charged upon that Generation, than they could be ſaid to have been Cotemporaries with thoſe Ages of *Abel* or *Zacharias*: But it is here thus repreſented, partly becauſe they were of the ſame Temper, and were acted by the like ſpirit of Envy and Hatred, as the Murtherers of *Abel* and *Zacharias*, *&c.* Partly it was as to *Zacharias*, becauſe the courſe of impiety in former Ages was carried along (though in a different

way) even to that Age; and lastly, because that what they were now agitating, and would shortly accomplish, would be a Crime of such malignity, as would *fill up the measure of their fathers*; and would determine in their Ruin, *ver.* 37, 38. *O Jerusalem!* &c. *behold your house is left unto you desolate.*

And it is as if he had said:

Ye think your selves clear of your Fathers Iniquity, forasmuch as ye Garnish the Sepulchres of those Prophets whom they wickedly Killed, and that ye are not Idolaters and Persecutors as they; and say, *If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets*; but you will so far outdo them, that ye will Kill and Crucify those whom I shall send, and reject the last tender of Divine Mercy, and thereby bring upon your selves ruin as inexpressible, as irreversible. For think of all the Blood of Pious and Just Men, that has been shed through all Ages of the World; think of that of *Abel*, and of *Zachariah*, and all that ye can think of, and yet the case will hold no comparison with what ye will do, in Persecuting, Killing, and Crucifying the Prophets, and Wise Men, that shall be sent to you, and also Him that sends them.

And

And if the Blood of *Abel cried for vengeance*, and that of *Zacharias* was *required* of your Progenitors; Then what will not fall upon this Generation! It will be *such as was not from the beginning of the creation*; It will be such as if all the Blood of the Prophets, and of Righteous Men from *Abel* downward to that of *Zacharias*, were *required* of you; *Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, &c. that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth; verily these things shall come upon this generation.* Gen. 4. 10. Matth. 13. 19. Luke 11. 50.

In Discoursing upon which Argument,

I shall shew;

I. That it often happens to the Best of Men, to be Opposed, and Persecuted, and Despitefully used in this World.

II. That this is consistent with the Providence of God and his Government of the World.

III. That in the sequel God doth right to his Providence, and to their Piety and Virtue by extraordinary Events.

I. It often happens to the best of Men to be Opposed and Evil-Treated.

I shall not go about to prove that which is matter of Fact, and has been the constant Observation of all Ages more or less. We need not go farther for the confirmation of it than the

Instances of the Text, *Abel* and *Zacharias*, and the rest of the *Righteous* Men upon Record: Or than the sad Instance which this Day sets before us; when a Person as Eminent for his Piety, as his Character and Dignity, was treated, as if he had been the Off-scouring of all things, and was, as many of the Righteous Men of Old, Persecuted and Slain.

And the Causes are as observable as the Fact, and of which there are as many, as there are Prejudices and Misunderstandings, contrary Passions and Interests. As long as there are Ambition and Pride, Envy and Malice, Covetousness on one hand, or expensive Vices on another. As long as there are contrary Habits, which are the Principles that rule in all Mankind, there will be Enmities and Oppositions; and if Virtue, and Religion, and the Best of Men are against Persons in these Circumstances, they will then retaliate the Injury, and be against Virtue, and Religion, and the best of Men. For then it is not what the thing is in it self, but what it is as to them; and it often is not because it is Religion, or Virtue, or the Best of Men, that they thus Despitefully use them; but because they are opposite to their Interest, or their Inclination, or sometimes are to their Reproach. Then it is

that

that the Pharisees are for condemning our Saviour, when they thought that *the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation.* John 11. 48.

And especially is this of the more fatal and pernicious consequence, if this Spirit be edged on by a false and mistaken Zeal; and Religion is pretended to by some to face an evil design, and is believed by others to be concerned in it, and is in danger to suffer.

For then this doth, as they will have it, justify and establish the Contention, and make it to be necessary. Then they think it laudable and meritorious even to *kill*, when, in their Opinion, it is *to do God service.* John 16. 2. It is then a Cause fit to venture their own life in, and a Cause that will oblige them to take away that of another: Nay, it will even serve to break through the Laws of Nature it self, and will have them to put those to Death, whom Nature would otherwise teach to Preserve, and with the hazard of their own Life to save from it. Thus it was foretold by our Saviour, *The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child,* &c. Matth. 10. 21.

By these and the like means, the Best of Men too often fall under the heavy hand of Violence and Oppression; and if we were then to judge of them by the usage they meet with, they must have

have been the worſt of Mankind. A caſe which hath tempted ſome to queſtion, and others to deny a Providence.

But this without reaſon, if there be nothing in theſe Proceedings and Events, but what is conſiſtent with the Divine Overſight and Government of the World.

II. Which is the next thing to be Diſcourſed of:

The Providence of God is ſeen in Preſerving all things in the ſame State and Order as at the firſt eſtabliſhment: And as he ordinarily leaves Natural Cauſes, and neceſſary Agents to act according to their proper Nature, and to keep to the Law and the Seaſon, at the firſt appointed and preſcribed; ſo he generally leaves voluntary and intelligent Beings to follow their own Inclinations, and to Chuſe, and Reſolve, and Act as they ſhall ſee meet.

And if it happens that ſuch Agents proceed upon wrong Principles, or miſtaken Meaſures, it is no more than if in meer Natural Cauſes there are ſome Preternatural Accidents happen, through the concourſe of different parts of Matter together.

And if ſometimes Good Men are left to their own Precipitance, as *Joſiah*, when he was not

to

to be dissuaded from Attacking *Pharaoh-Necho*; and Wicked Men are left to their own Perverseness and Obstinacy, as *Pharaoh*; or to their Pride, as the Haughty *Assyrian*; and they perish in it: This in the Voluntary World is no more extraordinary, than when there is Seed-time and Harvest in the Natural World; that is, that each acts according to the Nature they are of, and the Condition they are in. 2 Chron. 25. 20. Isa. 10.

And it is no imputation upon Providence, if in this way Good Men, or the Best of Men, fall sometimes into hard Circumstances, when Causes are left to their own tendency, and are (as it were) in their own Power. For Nature is but Nature; and to keep Nature in its course, is an Act of Providence; to keep Stated and Permanent Beings in their Station and Order, and Transient in a continued Succession, and Voluntary in their own Power and Liberty; is a special Fruit of the Divine Providence.

But I confess, if there were no more, and that Providence were a meer Supervisor, it would not be the Providence worthy of so Divine a Power, nor so worthy of that Veneration we owe to it.

There is therefore a more noble part of it behind, and that is, That though God generally

nerally keeps to the Laws he has given, and Preserves the World as he made it; yet he upon occasion interposes, and doth as well Govern the World as Preserve it; and as he can when he pleases stop the current of the violent Ocean for a Passage to his People, and make the *stars in their courses to fight* against their Enemies; so he doth Govern the Wills and Passions of Men, and turns them *as the rivers of water*, to or from their Purpose and Design, or promotes or hinders their Design from Success, as he thinks fit.

Judg. 5. 20.

Prov. 21. 1.

And if it be asked, Why he doth not interpose in cases that seem to us to be of the greatest Consequence, and which the Welfare of a Nation, the Safety of his People, the Good of his Church, turn upon; Why, for example, he doth not prevent the Sufferings and Oppressions of Good Men?

I Answer, Because it is for a greater Good, sometimes to themselves, sometimes to the Publick, by making them an Example of *Patience, Charity, and Constancy*; sometimes for the Advantage of the Church, and for the Propagation of Religion, and always for his own Honour and Service. Need we a greater Instance of this than the Sufferings and Death of our Blessed Saviour, with which seemingly, the Cause seemed to be lost;

loſt; *We truſted that it was he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*, ſaid the deſpairing Diſciples. Luke 24. 21.

And his Enemies thought they had prevented all after-growth of that Doctrine he Taught, when they had Slain him, and made ſure the Sepulchre by Sealing the Stone, and ſetting a Watch. But his Reſurrection baffled all their endeavours, and ſhewed how conſiſtent this his Crucifixion was with the Divine Providence, proceeding from the *Hand* and *Counſel* of God. Matth. 27. 65. Acts 4. 28.

Thus it happened, in a lower degree, with the Enemies of our Government, Church, and Religion, who thought all at an end, when they had cut down the Defender of it. But we know what the Event was, Confuſion to themſelves, and, in proceſs of time, a Glorious Deliverance and *Reſtoration* to out Ancient Government, Liberties, and Eſtabliſhed Religion.

And if God hath theſe noble Ends in Proſpect, and thus brings Good out of Evil; the Objection is foreclos'd, and the mouth of all Gainſayers muſt be ſtopp'd.

Thus it ordinarily is; and if in ſome caſes this be not ſo evident, and the Judgments of God prove a *great deep*, and too deep for us to fathom, it is no more an Objection againſt a Providence, than it is an Argument that a Child

is not a Rational Creature, becauſe at the preſent we cannot find in it the exerciſe of a Human Underſtanding.

In many caſes there is Faith and Expectation, and the farther Succeſs and Events of things, which we are to defer our Judgment to.

It is ſufficient God doth put forth ſuch acts of a Divine Power in ſome ſpecial Caſes and Inſtances, as ſhall enforce the Perverſeſt, the moſt Inconſiderate, and the moſt Inſolent of Mankind, the *Pharaoh's* and *Magicians*, the *Adonibezek's* and the *Nebuchadnezzar's*, to confeſs, *Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

Exod. 9. 27. 8. 19. Judg. 1. 7. Dan. 4. 37. Pſal. 58. 11.

And this will bring us nearer yet to the Subject of this Day, in the next Head: Which is,

III. That God doth in very eminent Inſtances, Caſes, and Events, do Right to his Providence, and to the Righteous Men that frequently Suffer and meet with the hardeſt Uſage in this World.

I ſhall not enlarge upon this Argument, but confine my ſelf to what is intimated in the Text, when the Puniſhment of Antecedent Crimes is transferred to, and falls upon Succeſſors; and an after-Age, or Ages, ſuffer for the foregoing, whether Perſonal, Domeſtical, or National; this is intimated here, *That upon you may come all*

the

the righteous blood, &c. but more expreſly is it in that Clauſe, *whom ye ſlew*; which the *Greek* Particle ὃν, being in the Singular, refers immediately to *Zacharias*; for it is not ſaid the Blood of *Abel*, and of all other *Righteous* Men throughout the World, *which they ſhed*, as it is of *Zacharias whom ye ſlew*. Which ſhews, that it is in another relation that they ſtood in to *Zacharias* than they did to *Abel*; and that was, becauſe *Zacharias* was ſlain by their Fathers, and which they owned to have for ſome Ages been imputed to their Nation before the Captivity (as has been beforeſaid).

The imputation of one Man's, or one Age's Sin, in the Puniſhment of it to another; and that Princes have ſuffered for the People*, and People for their Princes†, and Children for their Fathers, and an after-Generation for a fore-going, has been owned by all; the Heathens are full of it, and the Scriptures often appeal to it; and therefore this was a part of their ſolemn Confeſſions; and their Fathers Iniquity, as well as their own, was either Confeſſed, or Diſclaimed.

* Prov. 28. 2.
† 2 Sam. 21. 1.
Levit. 26. 40. Dan. 9. 16.

But it concerns us to look ſomewhat further into this Argument, for the uſe it may be of. And in Diſcourſing upon it,

In profecution of which I ſhall conſider,

1. What thoſe Sins are, whoſe Puniſhment above others is thus transferr'd.

2. The caſe of Perſons, or Nations, with reſpect to thoſe Sins.

3. What is to be done by way of relief and remedy.

As to the former, there are Two ſorts of Sins, Perſonal and Relative; Perſonal are ſuch as in their Effects paſs no farther than the Perſon, and reſpect not others, when all the hurt is as to himſelf, bating only what it may be in the Example; and then where the Sin reſts, there reſts the Puniſhment; and *the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall dye; the Son ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father, ----- and the wickedneſs of the wicked ſhall be upon himſelf* alone; as it is ſaid in the Prophet. Ezek. 18. 20.

But now where the Sins are Relative, and reſpect others, and which they are damnified by, then the Puniſhment is farther dilated and extended, and ſo it falls upon the Perſon and the Poſterity, as God the Supreme Lawgiver doth direct.

I acknowledge that there is one Sin, *viz.* That of Idolatry, to which a Threatning of this kind is annexed, as we find it in the Second Commandment; though it doth not immediately affect others; but being it ſo directly ſtruck at the foundation of all Religion, and more eſpe-

cially

cially that of the *Jews* (whose Constitution was a Theocracy, immediately under God) there was this terrible Sanction added to it, to make Persons the more cautious of Offending. But otherwise the Sins so Threatned, and for which Persons in Succession were Punished, were the Sins that the Interests of others, or the Publick, were concerned in and damnified by (as has been said). The reason of which seems to be, Because as to Personal Vices, the Offenders shall answer for them in another World; where every Man shall bear his own Burthen, and give an Account of himself to God. But those Sins which respect others, and which the Welfare and Peace of Societies are Prejudiced by, they (besides the Punishments in reserve in the next Life) shall here be Punished for: And that they may be deterred from such Practices, the Threatning involves their Posterity with them; than which nothing, generally, more awes Mankind. And especially is this more to be observed in those cases, which the Laws of Men cannot, or do not, reach, or the Executive Power in a Government is too Weak to Punish.

I shall give an Instance or two of this kind, omitting others, *viz.*

1. Notorious Injustice; the Oppressing of others,

others that are not able to Help, or Right themselves.

In this case the Providence of God doth often (I dare not say, always) concern it self: So that if Restitution be not made, either the Person himself shall see it moulder away before his Eyes, or is snatched away from it, as the Fool in the Gospel, with a, *This Night*, ----- and then *whose shall all these things be which thou hast provided?* Or suppose the Estate thus acquired be turned over entire to his Heir, some secret Worm goes along with it, that like *Jonah's* Gourd it withers away, and he is exposed to all the Miseries of an indigent Life; and ends, perhaps, where the Father began.

Luke 12. 20.

The Observation is not new, nor rare; it was Proverbial among the Heathens, as is well known, *De male quæsitis vix gaudet tertius hæres*; and no Nation but can answer it in their own Language.

2. Another Instance is that of Bloodshed ing, or Murcher. The Life of Man is easily taken away, and what any desperate Person may Command; and therefore when nothing is more Valuable, or that the World in Succession more depends upon, Almighty God by a special and early Law took care for the security of it.

Gen.

Gen. 9. 6. *Whoſo ſheddeth man's blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed.* For which no ſatisfaction was to be allowed, and nothing leſs than Blood was eſtimated as an equivalent for it, where it was diſcovered; and where it was not, it was to lie upon the Place, till it was ſome way or other Expiated, and as far as could be, there was an Atonement made. This was the caſe of unknown Homicide under the Law, when the Elders of the City, next to the Slain, were required to waſh their Hands over the Heifer, and to ſay, *Our hands have not ſhed this blood, neither have our eyes ſeen it; be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Iſrael, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people's charge, and that blood ſhall be forgiven them. So ſhalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you,* Deut. 21. 3. For Blood was ſaid to Defile the Land, *Numb.* 35. 35. Numb 35. 31.

From hence it appears that innocent Blood was reputed to lie upon the Land till an Expiation was made. The proper Expiation was the Blood of the Guilty himſelf, where-ever he was to be found; and in that caſe there was no Commutation, no Subſtitution, no Sacrifice allowed, but Life was to go for Life, according to the Law, *Numb.* 35. 30, 31. *Whoſo killeth any perſon, the murtherer ſhall be put to death,* -----

Ye

Ye ſhall take no ſatisfaction for the life of a murtherer who is guilty of death, but he ſhall be ſurely put to Death. If he was not diſcovered, then the courſe before ſpoken of, in killing the Heifer, and uſing the Rites preſcribed on that occaſion, was to be taken: And in either of thoſe caſes, the Guilt went no farther. It was not then imputed to the Nation, it lay wholly on him that committed the Fact; and who in the ſecret Providence of God was to Anſwer for it.

But if it were diſcovered, and the Murtherer was ſuffered to eſcape without that condign and perſonal Puniſhment required; then beſides what he himſelf ſhould account for to God, the Supreme Judge, the Charge fell upon the Place or the People, and they were to Anſwer to God for it.

And this tranſlation of the Guilt is ſo much the more Obſervable, as the Fact is Aggravated by the Quality of the Perſon Suffering, and thus Uſed; or by the Relation the Perſon or Perſons Offending are in. It was ſo here, when they were Righteous Men, and Prophets that were Slain, as *Abel* and *Zacharias*: And when it was a National Act, as was the Killing of *Zacharias*, in which Fact there was a concurrence of all Qualities and Degrees, as you may ſee it, 2 *Chron.* 24. 17, 21.

And

And this was above all manifeſt in the Caſe here tacitly referr'd to, which is the Crucifixion of our Saviour; and which that infatuated People fixed the Guilt of upon themſelves by an indelible Imprecation, when they cried out, *His blood be on us and our children*, Matth. 27. 25.

And there is ſomewhat like this, in the Fact which gave the ſad Occaſion to this Day's Aſſembly; it was Heinous in it ſelf, Aggravated by the Quality of the Perſon, and too great a Concurrence in the Guilt of it, though not ſo great as to make it Univerſal, or a National Crime. God forbid it ſhould ever be ſo in the Effects of it.

2. But this leads me to conſider the Caſe; and that is Twofold.

(1.) Of thoſe that are in the ſame State with their Anceſtors, and are either Guilty of the ſame Facts, or are of the ſame Temper with them. As is the caſe of the *Jews* repreſented by our Saviour, who though not Idolaters as their Forefathers before the Captivity, were yet of the ſame rancorous temper; and would in Fact be Guilty of the ſame Perſecution of Righteous Men as they; and ſo they might well be called their Children, whoſe meaſure they were haſtening to fill up. This is a Caſe all muſt acknowledge, and is agreeable to the common Senſe of Mankind.

(2.) There is the case of those, that though Descendants from such as have been Guilty of great Crimes, yet are not involved in them; and so in reason may be thought not obnoxious to any Punishment for their sakes, or for the sake of what has been done by Progenitors. And the case is resolved in favour to such, *Ezek.* 18. 4, 20. *The soul that sinneth shall die, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father*, &c. according to the ancient Law given to that People, *Deut.* 24. 16. *The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, neither shall the children be put to death for their fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.*

But here we are to Observe, That the stress lies upon that, That *the son shall not be put to death for the father*; this was a standing Law they were to keep to, and which none but Almighty God, the Great Lawgiver, could reverse, as he did, only in some special cases, such as that of *Dathan* and *Achan*, Numb. 16. 32. *Josh.* 7. 24.

2 Kings 14. 6.

But it is not to be denied, that notwithstanding this, there are Cases in which the Innocent may suffer for the Nocent; Innocent Posterity, I mean, for their Nocent Ancestors, as has been beforeshewed. I acknowledge it is a difficult matter to state this Case, as to all the Circumstances and Measures of it. There is no constant Rule

Rule that the Providence of God inviolably keeps to in the Government of the World; and whatever Judgment we may be liable to make as to ſome Events, and in which the Power and Juſtice of God is conſpicuous to all; and however in ſome caſes he may generally ſo proceed, as that we may raiſe Maxims from thence; yet being it is not univerſally ſo, we are not to apply them without great Caution, nor can we particularly apply them without danger of miſtake: Our Saviour has taught us not to Judge raſhly; in anſwer to that Queſtion put to him by his Diſciples, *Who did ſin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* John 9. 2.

That God may Puniſh one Generation for the Faults of another, is not inconſiſtent with his Juſtice; and that he doth ſo, is no uncommon Obſervation: But this is not always viſible; it ſometimes, for ought appears to us, doth not proceed to ſuch ſeverity in the Inſtances belonging to this Argument.

What becomes us to Obſerve from hence, is to lay reſtraints upon our ſelves from ſuch a conſideration, That as we would not leave a Curſe behind us upon our Poſterity, ſo we ſhould be Juſt and Faithful in all our Concernments.

And again, That we ſhould prevent any ſuch Curſe from falling upon our ſelves, that we

may be liable to from our Fore-fathers; especially where there is a manifest reason for a just suspicion at least. Which brings to

3. To consider what is to be done by way of relief and remedy, where this is the case known, or vehemently suspected to be. If the case be altogether secret or unknown, no Person is therein concerned, more than he is in such as are simply Sins of Ignorance; in which a general Confession and Repentance is sufficient. But in a case known, or much suspected, other measures are to be taken.

And the first thing here to be proposed, is, That Posterity be very careful to avoid those Sins, which they know, or may conceive, their Progenitors to have been guilty of; because else they may be accountable, not only for those Sins which are properly theirs, but for those of others so far as that Guilt loses not by a progression, but every Age contributes their share; till (as it was with the *Amorites*) their iniquity be *full*, and they become *ripe* for excision and destruction (as has been before said).

Gen. 15. 16. Rev. 14. 15.

And the next thing is, that they shew their aversion to them by some particular and special marks and significations of it. I acknowledge that there are some cases so extreme, that such a remedy may come too late; and there are some

reasons

reaſons why Almighty God will not altogether paſs by the tokens of a high diſpleaſure. So it was with *David*, though a true Penitent. And ſo it was with the *Iſraelites*, whom neither the Religion and Conduct of an Excellent Prince, *Joſiah*; nor even the Interceſſion of ſuch Pious Perſons as *Noah*, *Job*, and *Moſes*, &c. could have ſaved.

2 Sam. 12. 10, 14.

2 Kings 23. 25.

Jerem. 15. 1. Ezek. 14. 14.

But let the caſe be what it will, as we know not how far the Mercy of God may extend, and *who can tell if God will turn and repent*, as the *Ninevites* rightly argued; ſo if it be otherwiſe determined, that God will not ſpare nor forgive as to Temporal Puniſhment; yet ſuch Perſons, and ſuch a People, have done all that is poſſible for them to do, and muſt ſubmit the whole to the ſecret Judgment of God.

Jonah 3. 9.

From the whole we may be able to judge of the Caſe before us this day. The Crime was indeed Publick and Notorious, but I am not willing to call it National; for a National Act implies a National Conſent, and a National Conſent is by a Univerſal Voice of the Community of all degrees, or by their proper Repreſentatives. But the Contrivers and Executors of this Bloody Deſign, were far from being in ſuch a Capacity, being no more truly the Repreſentatives of the People, than Pyrates and

and Robbers, that for a ſeaſon obtain ſo ſtrong a Force as is not to be oppoſed.

All that can be ſaid is, That too great a part of the Nation might have been guilty of ſuch things as gradually and inſenſibly led to it, and contrary to whatever they fore-thought, ended in it; or at leaſt our other *crying ſins* (as the Office for the Day ſignifies) might have provoked Almighty God to ſuffer it ſo to be.

This may render it a ſuſpected caſe, and what may be a reaſon ſufficient for a National Humiliation; as it was of *Job*'s Sacrifice, *it may* Job 1. 5. *be*, ſaith he, *that my ſons have ſinned*, in their Feſtival Entertainments.

And accordingly we have the proper courſe taken by the Nation and their Repreſentatives (as ſoon as it was in its own power) to prevent any further Puniſhment, and that was to diſclaim it before God and Men, and to ſhew their Reſentment of it by the moſt publick Declaration, and their Eſtabliſhing an Anniverſary Day of Faſting and Humiliation, that whatever Guilt might lie upon the Nation, by that means, might be averted.

And we have good reaſon to hope this courſe has not failed of ſucceſs, and that God has had, and will have a Favour for us, and be Merciful to

us,

us, by the many Teſtimonies he has given us of it in our frequent Deliverance, in a wonderful manner, from thoſe Dangers which threatned us, and we were encompaſſed with, wherein he has done right to his Providence, and ſhewed that there is nothing too hard for him to do.

What remains, but that this ſhould be a warning to all, that they be cautious how far they engage in any Deſign againſt the Publick Peace and Welfare of a Nation; that they preſs not too near upon the fences of Government, leſt by ſome violent motion they be tranſported beyond the conduct of their own Reaſon and Duty. For as no Man is ſafe in his own cuſtody without the Divine Aid; ſo neither is he in his own cuſtody if he is not watchful over himſelf. And when he is neither in his own keeping, nor in that of Divine Providence (as He is not that ventures beyond the bounds of his Duty) who can tell how far he will go, or what the event may be?

But however, let Men be as bad as they will, and want neither boldneſs to undertake a bad Deſign, even that of Aſſaſſinating Princes, nor others to inſtigate them; let Princes be fearleſs of Danger (as *David* was, 2 *Sam.* 21. 16.) and be never ſo liable to it; yet *He that is higher*

than

Eccles. 5. 8. *than the higheſt regardeth, and there be higher than they*, that will Protect them. It is that Divine Providence, that not only ſits at the Helm, and ſteers all Publick Counſels and Affairs, but alſo watcheth over the Perſons and Lives of the greateſt Monarchs (who ſtand in as much need of ſuch an Inviſible Guard, as we of their Protection).

And what therefore, as it becomes the greateſt to Acknowledge, and to Implore the Protection of for themſelves, ſo what it becomes all that are Lovers of their Prince, their Country, and their own Intereſt to join in, according to the Apoſtle's direction, *I exhort, that firſt of all* (in a more eſpecial manner) *ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and all that are in authority; that we may lead*, &c. *For this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God*, 1 Tim. 2. 1.

FINIS.